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ABSTRACT

Sixty-three "gifted" 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students from 13 rural school districts in eastern Washington participated for 16 weeks in a special educational enrichment program. Four Teaching-Resource Centers were established throughout the county, and 15-17 students from adjacent districts met at each center during one day per week. One special teacher conducted all classes and moved from center to center. Drama, art, creative writing, social studies, mathematics, and film making were all the principle areas of study. At the project's conclusion, observations regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the project were obtained from parents, students, and regular classroom teachers. These observations are discussed in detail in the report, and suggestions for improving programs for rural "gifted" children are outlined by the special teacher. (Author)

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Final Grant Report

THE WHITMAN COUNTY PROJECT FOR ACADEMICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS: AN EVALUATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Chapter One: Development of a Working Model..... 1

Selection of Students..... 2

Selection of a Teacher..... 3

Development of Appropriate Curriculums..... 4

Establishment of Teaching-Resource Centers..... 4

Summary..... 5

Chapter Two: An Evaluation..... 6

Descriptive Study..... 8

Student Questionnaire..... 11

Teacher Questionnaire..... 15

Parent Questionnaire..... 19

Discussion..... 22

Chapter Three: Comments By the Project Teacher..... 24

CHAPTER ONE: DEVELOPMENT OF A WORKING MODEL

By

Dr. Dennis Warner

While numerous urban school districts throughout the nation have developed special education programs for intellectually gifted students, little attempt has been made to provide similar programs in rural areas. In small districts which have, perhaps, only 1 or 2 "gifted" students at each grade level, special programs have not been feasable. Cooperation among several small districts on a joint project has, likewise, been viewed by some as impractical because of the lengthy distances among districts.

In spite of the problems inherent in establishing a special program for intellectually superior students in a rural area, the Division of Curriculum and Instruction of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Washington, gave financial support to Intermediate School District # 101 to develop such a program in 13 rural school districts throughout Whitman County during second semester, 1971. The program called for 1) the selection of 50-60 students to participate in the experimental classes, 2) the hiring of a teacher with qualifications to work with "gifted" children, 3) the development of an appropriate curriculum of study, and 4) the establishment of four teaching and resource centers throughout the county.

Selection of Students

Our first step in selecting student participants was to ask each third, fourth and fifth grade teacher in the county to nominate several students whom he felt would profit from enrichment experiences in a special classroom. (A checklist of desired student characteristics was

given to each teacher to aid in his nominations). The decision to involve 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students in preference to other age groups was based upon two considerations: 1) the belief that special programs should begin early in a child's education and 2) the feeling that secondary students, because of greater freedom in course selection, have greater opportunity for enrichment than do elementary aged students. Since students were to be bussed to Teaching-Resource Centers, it was felt that those younger than 3rd grade should probably not be included.

Our second step in selecting participants was to survey the most current achievement test results for each 3rd, 4th and 5th grade pupil in the County. Each subtest score was converted to a stanine score and cummulated to obtain a composite score. Pupils who were either nominated by a teacher or found to score in the upper 15% of the County on a cumulative achievement were, with permission from their parents, given a PPVT. Final selection was made on the basis of the PPVT scores with those 63 students scoring 124 and above being invited to participate.

In summary, then, the students involved in the project may be defined as intellectually bright (i.e., scoring in roughly the upper 5% on national norms on the PPVT) third, fourth and fifth grade children with a history of successful school experiences (as defined by achievement test results and/or teacher evaluation). We chose to call these children "academically talented" and the program was titled the "Whitman County Project For Academically Talented Students" (WCPATS).

Selection of a Teacher

After screening thirteen applicants, the project staff selected

Miss Judy Webb, a graduate of The University of Iowa in the field of Elementary Education as the teacher. Miss Webb had one and a half years of previous teaching experience at the elementary level and impressed us as having the high degree of creativity and flexibility necessary to develop a unique learning atmosphere for academically talented students.

Development of Appropriate Curriculums

In January 1971, approximately one month before classes were to begin, Miss Webb undertook the development of a curriculum of study for those students who would spend one day per week for sixteen weeks under her direction. It was the firm opinion of those who developed the WCPATS project that the program should not focus upon the dissemination of factual information. We viewed the project as a means of enriching the participant's educational experience and not as a means of directly accelerating their learning rate in traditional academic subjects. We therefore, determined to place great emphasis upon "thinking and feeling", i.e., upon problem solving techniques and upon objectives in the affective domain. Classroom Ideas for Encouraging Thinking and Feeling, a text by Frank E. Williams, was used initially as a model in structuring the lesson plans. As the semester progressed, the model was relied upon less and greater emphasis was placed upon the direction indicated by the students.

Establishment of Teaching-Resource Centers

Once students for the project had been selected, it was possible to select locations throughout Whitman County which were near to "high

concentration areas" and would, therefore, keep traveling to a minimum. It was decided to establish one center in Palouse, one in Oakesdale, and one in Steptoe (with the Steptoe Center being used two days per week). The teacher traveled to each center and met with each class once per week.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been the description of the Whitman County Project For Academically Talented Students, with special emphasis being placed upon the development and implementation of the project. The following paper will discuss the manner in which the project has been evaluated and the results of the evaluation.

CHAPTER TWO: AN EVALUATION

By

Robert Pringle

This has been a very rewarding year for all of us working directly with this program and we appreciate the interest and cooperation of all the parents, school administrators, and teachers. A program such as this is very unique and by its nature, controversial. We are very thankful that the local school administrators and teachers were receptive to supporting the program and we feel this to be a reflection of the forward-looking philosophies of school personnel in this county, particularly those in administration. New ideas must be tested in order for education to progress in today's fast-moving society. Society changes, children change, and education must change to meet the needs of children today and to anticipate their needs in the future.

This program was an attempt to provide meaningful enrichment for the upper six percent of the students in grades three through five in Whitman County. Our evaluation essentially consists of questionnaires given to the students, parents and regular classroom teachers. We do not know of any other appropriate way to evaluate the program as it does not lend itself to traditional testing procedures.

DESCRIPTIVE STUDY

The following information was obtained from a confidential questionnaire. Sixty-three questionnaires were mailed to the parents and forty six were returned completed. The questionnaires represent twenty-five male and twenty-one female students enrolled in the project.

Parents Describe the Preschool Academically Talented Child

Parents reported that many of the children walked before their first year. Mean age for the girls was 10.9 months, and for the boys 11.4 months.

Girls were reported as learning to talk somewhat earlier than boys. The mean age for girls was 15.0 months, and for the boys 15.9 months.

The boys and girls were relatively equal in the age at which they began to read. The mean age for boys was 5 years 6 months and for girls 5 years 7 months.

It should be noted that walking, talking, and reading were not specifically defined on the parent questionnaire. These reports are therefore subject to error and must be viewed with caution because of the inability to specify exactly when the child walked unaided, talked intelligibly, or first read with comprehension.

Parents were asked the position in order of birth of their academically talented child and how many children were in their family. 29.8% were first born, 31.9% were second born, 27.6% were third born, 6.7% were fourth born, 2.12% were fifth born, and 2.12% were adopted.

72% of the children came from families of two or three children and 28% came from families with four to eight children. The mean number of children in the family for both boys and girls combined was 3.08%.

Special Home Needs

Parents were asked if they felt their child had any special need or problem at home. 63% of those reporting felt none was apparent. 8% thought emotional problems existed, 16% were described as having difficulty in family living, and 13% were felt to have other types of problems such as daydreaming, hard to keep busy, not neat, etc.

Parents were asked to describe what their child liked to do best when alone. 78% of the parents mentioned reading as one of the activities. For girls, participation-aesthetic activities and reading were listed most often, and for boys, handicraft and reading.

Of those reporting, 37% of the parents indicated their children were receiving private lessons. These lessons mainly consisted of piano, dance, guitar, and horseback riding instruction.

Educational Level and Occupation of Parents

Parents were asked the level of education which they had reached and the advanced degrees they had received. 24% of the fathers completed college with either a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science Degree, 1 had a Masters Degree and 2 had Doctorates. 23% of the mothers completed college with degrees, and 2 had Masters Degrees. 9% of the fathers and 4% of the mothers had less than a high school education.(See Table 1)

Table 1

OCCUPATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS OF ACADEMICALLY TALENTED STUDENTS

	Mother		Father	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Professional	4	9	6	14
2. Semi-Professional	-	-	1	2
3. Managerial	-	-	4	9
4. Clerical	3	7	2	3
5. Sales	1	2	-	-
6. Service	-	-	1	2
7. Agriculture	-	-	18	42
8. Skilled	-	-	6	14
9. Semi-Skilled	1	2	4	9
10. Housewife	35	80	-	-
Total	44	100	42	100
Not Reported	2		4	

Of the fathers who reported their occupations, 14% were classified as professional, 42% were in agriculture, and 14% were in skilled occupations. Most of the mothers reported their occupation as housewife (80%), and 9% worked in jobs classified as professional.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

The student questionnaire was given to the students in the second week of March, 1971. The students were asked to be as truthful as they could in answering the questions and they were told not to sign their names as we wanted to know how they really felt about these things. 55 students were in attendance the week the questionnaire was given and the following are their responses. It should be noted that many students gave multiple responses to the questions and that the number after each response is the total number of students who gave that response only or in combination with some of the others. All the responses of the students are presented.

1. What do you like most about regular school?

Response	Number
Math	18
Recess	12
Art	12
P.E.	12
Science	12
My Teacher	11
Spelling	8
Music	7
Reading	7
My Friends	6
English	5
Social Studies	5
History	3
Lunch	2
Everything	1
Discussions	1
Free Time	1
Geography	1
Learning	1
None's real good, none's real bad	1
Not much	1
Getting OUT	1

2. What do you like least about regular school?

Response	Number
English	17
Math	15
My Teacher	7
Social Studies	6
Reading	6
Science	4
Hacks	3
People don't realize what you want to do so they won't let you	3
Having to write when caught talking	2
Geography	2
Spelling	2
Nothing at all	2
Have to play like follow the leader	1
Creative writing	1
Music	1
Work	1
The food	1
Fighting with other kids	1
Discussing	1
When we go home	1
Don't have enough art	1
It's cruddy there	1
You get in trouble when you don't do anything	1

3. What do you like most about this special class?

Response	Number
Everything	18
The teacher	9
Art	8
Talking about things	3
The island exercise	3
No grades	3
Social Studies	3
No real hard work	2
Freedom	2
Recess	2
Its fun	2
The work	2
The play	2
Math	2
Using imagination	1
It is not boring	1
The classes	1
Geoboard	1

Research on different things	1
It's easy	1
Being able to make choices for yourself	1
Trying to find out what the differences of two things are	1

4. What do you like least about this special class?

Response	Number
Nothing	28
When we have recess	4
The people in the class	4
I miss my friends	3
Writing things down	2
Math	2
Lunch	2
Art	2
Different school	2
Social Studies	1
I miss my teacher	1
I miss singing	1
The room is too small	1
Working with geoboards	1
Don't have regular studies	1
Answering questions	1
The work	1
A person in the class I don't like	1
The girls	1
Going back to regular school	1

5. What about the special class teacher do you like the most?

Response	Number
She understands us	10
She's nice	9
Everything	6
She's pretty	6
The way she dresses	6
Her looks	3
She's young	3
She teaches good	3
Her hair	3
She lets us have freedom of choice	2
She listens to what we say	1
She lets us do what we want to do	1
She accepts us for what we are	1
She doesn't have pets	1
She's with it	1
She doesn't give grades	1

Her acts	1
She gets into detail	1
She's friendly	1
She has a sense of humor	1
She has things that I can get interested in	1
When we do the Geoboard	1
She likes her students	1
What she has us do	1
She makes everything fun	1
She explains things very good, doesn't get mad	1
She's fair	1
The way she has us discuss things	1
She lets us do a variety of stuff	1
Her eyes	1
Her ability to teach better than anyone else	1
She isn't hard on you like other teachers	1
She's not mean	1
She's smart	1
The name she calls me	1

6. What about the special class teacher do you like least?

Response	Number
Nothing	37
When she makes us write things down	2
Her contacts; I like her glasses better	1
Her eyes	1
She calls on you when you don't have your hand up	1
She comes and goes too much	1
When she scolds us	1
When she puts you on the spot	1
Her way of explaining things	1
What she makes us do	1
She wears her dresses too short	1
The way she works with Geoboards	1
Her shoes	1
Her earrings	1
How she just sits there	1
She doesn't make us work enough	1

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

In the second week of May, 1971, fifty seven teacher questionnaires were mailed to the principals of the regular classroom teachers who had students enrolled in the project. Eighteen of these questionnaires were returned to aid in our evaluation. The following are the questions asked the teachers and their responses in the appropriate categories.

1. Have you been able to recognize any positive change in your students as a result of their participation in the Project For Academically Talented Students?

Yes	No
12%	78%

2. Have you been able to recognize any negative change in your students as a result of their participation in the Project For Academically Talented Students?

Yes	No
44%	56%

3. Did you try any of the activities or similar activites listed in the Weekly Lesson Plan for PATS?

Yes	No	No, but I will
56%	28%	16%

4. Did you feel the Weekly Lesson Plan was needed or helpful in any way?

Yes	No
72%	28%

5. Do you feel the program should be continued?

Yes	No	Not As It Is	Don't feel qualified to judge
28%	22%	22%	28%

The following is the final question asked of the teachers. Since the answers were varied, some of the more meaningful responses will be quoted exactly as they were written.

6. What changes should be made to make the program better? Please include any other comments regarding this program.

"I definitely feel that missing this much school is detrimental to any student in the lower grades. Any such program should not infringe on the school time of the students. Scheduling on Saturdays might be the answer. This whole program seemed poorly planned and rushed to me. The methods of choosing the students are questionable in my opinion. I think certain students could profit from such a program - but certainly not at the expense of missing one fifth of their time at school. However, at least in our school, two of the children chosen were already lacking in self discipline as far as their academic work was concerned and this has made matters worse. I also seriously question that any student in the first three grades should be taken out of the regular classroom. Children this age miss enough school through sickness without a regularly scheduled loss. I'm sure the teacher (I understand she doesn't like this term) was very competent and the children had lots of fun."

"The span of 3rd grade to 5th grade seems great. Is it working out well? Are areas of special talent being noted for the students? Will this be brought to the attention of the teacher? We would prefer some other day during the week rather than a Monday. It would be well if these students were in school on Monday as this is frequently an organizational type day for their classroom work."

"I think children can be creative and still show respect by using Miss Webb. These are manners stressed in the regular classroom and I think they're sound. Being creative doesn't have to include projects of waste. Example--cutting up yarn as being freed from a web. We don't even have enough yarn available to do a stitchery project and complete it. I think that given the extra money for supplies that the regular classroom teacher could incorporate more experiences in her room that would be beneficial to the slow student as well as the talented."

"I don't feel the students have done as well as the rest of the students that [sic] didn't take part in the program. Before they went down to the school they were in the very top of the class and now other students have passed them. The students wouldn't be here for Tuesday's classes and as a result all day Wednesday is spent catching up. You can't expect the child to do their class work and mine in the same day. If any of my students are in this program next year, I will strongly urge the parents not to let them attend. I can't see any value of the program except maybe socially."

"It should be expanded as much as possible. Ideally, every student should be involved in such a class."

The following are quotes regarding the type of positive changes that came about as a result of the Project:

"The student seems to feel freer to express himself-- he appears more confident in himself, he is not afraid to speak his thoughts."

"Out of four students, one has shown great improvement in classroom attitude and behavior, another, greater enthusiasm for learning, and a third a considerable improvement in social adjustments."

"One student said that he now better understood the reason for studying some school subjects, evidently because of discussions about this."

"Discussion habits have improved. He has listened more critically."

Since 44% of the teachers who returned the questionnaire felt there was a negative change as a result of the program, some of the responses considered to be representative of these teacher's feelings will be presented below:

"He has grown much more careless in his necessary day to day work. He seems to think the practice work shouldn't be necessary. His day to day grades have dropped noticeably."

"They felt that it is play and they are missing their regular work. Decided deterioration in behavior of one student. Another wanted to return to regular classroom, because she felt she was missing her studies."

"One of my students dropped because he is a quiet person who didn't care for the freedom of activity. I had thought it would be good for him to go. Another is tending to become a discipline problem."

"One boy seems to feel that since he evidently is a little superior, his assignments in regular school are really not too important."

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

A second questionnaire was sent to the parents of the sixty-three children originally selected for the program. The questionnaires were mailed on the second week of May, 1971. Thirty-six of these questionnaires were returned to contribute to our evaluation of The Project For Academically Talented Students. Below are the questions asked the parents and their responses.

1. Do you think your child has benefited in any way from participating in the program?

Yes	No	Yes and No	Can't Tell
77%	5%	22%	16%

2. Have you noticed any negative change in your child's behavior as a result of participation?

Yes	No	Can't Tell
11%	86%	3%

3. Do you, as a parent, feel this program should be continued next year?

Yes	No	Don't Know
80%	9%	11%

Listed below is the final question asked of the parents. Some of the most representative replies will be quoted.

4. What changes would you see as beneficial to the program if it is continued next year? Please include any other comments regarding this program.

"It is difficult to evaluate with so short a period in the program. I would like to see the same children in the program next year as I feel you could then really see the value of it. I do feel strongly about keeping the same children involved through a full school year. My boy has expressed his desire to continue and as he is in the 5th grade he really hates to not be able to go next year. I like the emphasis on applying principles of learning to actual life situations."

"Selfishly I believe my child has benefited so much from this program that I would like to see him continue. My regret is that he can't have this type of teaching every day. However, his regular classroom teacher has done a beautiful job of adopting the basic ideas of the project into daily methods and thusly given others in the class an opportunity to gain from these same experiences."

"I feel that this program has given my child more confidence. She now feels free to try her ideas. I would like to see some of this program in our Public Schools to help other children gain in confidence. I like this program because the children learned about things they just do not have in small schools."

"The program seems to broaden the idea that there is more to learning than the cut and dried studies taught in regular class. However, in my child's case the day she returns to class, 4 times out of 5 her teacher gives a test. Also, I was under the impression no homework was to be given for the day she went to Steptoe. Every Wednesday when she returns, she has to check in with her teacher for the day's work. I can say, however, that my child's grades have not slipped in any way."

"I still believe in the good old-fashioned teachers and schools. I think there is getting to be too much freedom and too much self-expression. Students will always need discipline and I want my children to have it, at school, or at home, or anywhere else."

"Experiences from the special classroom were dinner table conversation in much greater proportion than the one-fifth of the school week they occupied."

"We felt the important part of the class was letting the children talk and question the teacher; letting them participate instead of just being told everything to do?"

"This program did stimulate my child to do better in her regular work and this, I feel, is very beneficial. Some kids just need this kind of reinforcement."

"My child regards his Wednesday session with Judy as something very special. He is able to express himself and any opinion or ideas he has, without feeling pushy, or being laughed at or taunted. Judy has a great compassion for these children and this self-expression of the child among friends is very important to his growing up with confidence in himself. The encouragement of being able to express himself has made him realize that school taken as a whole, is not all boredom. He has become enthusiastic about school and actually enjoys homework. We encourage him at home, but I feel he has gained more assurance, being with other children who have the same things in common."

"We, as parents, as taxpayers and also members of the education profession, feel this program has been poorly handled. The children selected need to be challenged academically and creatively. We feel free undirected discussion on subjects they have no knowledge of, or little interest in and don't relate to their interests, is of little value or challenge to them."

"I feel that both boys have regained the zest for education which they seemed to have lost since transferring to this area. Makes up for some of the creative areas not covered in their regular school."

"I think this type of program is hard to evaluate at a specific time. My feelings are that the benefits will be shown from now on for a number of years. Personally speaking, since we have older children graduating from college now, we feel an education such as this might be reflected even by the time these children reach college level. We feel that Miss Webb is the greatest and she has reached our child in a way that has been an extra pleasure to us all."

"All in all, we feel like it is a tremendous learning experience and that the one day a week spent at Steptoe is more beneficial than the four other days a week spent in the fourth grade."

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most revealing information from this study is the discrepancy between the regular classroom teacher's perception of positive and negative change and the perceptions of the parents (see Table 2).

Table 2

DISCREPANCY BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON PERCEIVED POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE CHANGE AS A RESULT OF PATS PARTICIPATION

	Teachers		Parents	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Positive Change	12%	78%	77%	5%
Negative Change	44%	56%	11%	86%

More teachers than parents were inclined to see neither positive or negative change as a result of participation.

There could be many reasons for the contrast in perceived change. In teaching the class, Miss Webb focused on development in the following areas in their order of importance: (1) Emotional Growth, (2) Social Growth, and (2) Intellectual Development. With goals such as these, it becomes more evident how a discrepancy could develop between the perceptions of the teachers and the parents. Parents observe their child in a totally different situation than teachers. They are aware of all aspects of the child: social, emotional and intellectual. Children are trained to respond differently in the classroom than in

the home. Most children probably have more opportunity to express themselves behaviorally and verbally at home than at school.

Teachers also could have been unaware of the project's true intent. During the time the classroom was in operation, an "open door" policy was in effect regarding visitation by administrators and teachers. Administrators were encouraged to observe the classroom and make suggestions, and actually see it in operation. Two principals and one teacher took advantage of this opportunity. Additionally, the school personnel were told that Miss Webb would be available one day per week for consultation with regular classroom teachers and administrators regarding students, their adjustment, or anything related to the program. She was never called upon for such a consultation. She did have a meeting with the faculty of one district, but she promoted this meeting herself.

In summary, we have presented a model of a workable program for academically talented students in a rural area and an evaluation of this program after its initial 16 weeks of operation. We have included both positive and negative aspects of the program and we hope that this objectivity will help others in similar program development for academically talented students.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMENTS BY THE PROJECT TEACHER

By

Judith Webb

I accepted the job of Project Teacher for the Academically Talented Children in Whitman County with no experience in the area of exceptional children. I did have one and one half years experience in the public elementary school system.

The two most difficult problems to tackle in initial preparation were the choice of approach and the choice of activities. Recalling my previous experiences in public education with little enthusiasm, I knew that my approach would have to be different from the traditional text-books, fixed rows facing front, teacher-oriented classroom. My own personal interactions with children have led me to endorse an approach more in line with the ideas of A. S. Neill, John Holt, Ivan Illich and other modern educators.

In order to gain more self-confidence before I began teaching in this new situation, I did the following three things: I read about the inquiry method; I spoke to resource people including a drama instructor at WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY, a social studies specialist and a math specialist at W.S.U., a professor of english at W.S.U., and Ila Field, Art Consultant for Whitman County Intermediate School District #101. I also visited the program for gifted children in Seattle, Washington, which has been in existence four years.

After observing the program in Seattle which appeared to be "inquiry subject" oriented, I decided that my approach would be inquiry oriented with less emphasis on subject. There would be more emphasis on what the children are concerned about now and will be concerned about in the future. I felt that the children would find this kind of approach more conducive to free expression and creativity.

As I stated before, another problem in addition to approach was the choice of activities to use in the classroom. I had decided initially that the most ideal situation would be for the children to spend half the day on individual projects and the other half on group activities. This idea quickly proved incompatible with the structure of the program for two reasons. First of all, each child would spend only one day a week in the special classroom. This meant that if a child began a project one day, she would have to wait seven days before she could work on the project again, unless of course she wanted to spend time on it at home. Unfortunately or maybe fortunately, children's curiosity and attention span are not conducive to this kind of structure. Secondly, if children were involved in individual projects I would perceive my role as being an assistant or facilitator to help find materials and resources. This is almost an impossible task with sixty three children in three different locations.

The best alternative at this point was for me to plan the activities and hope that they would be interesting to most of the children. This was my final plan although I had reservations about it. At this point, I had to choose areas which would provide enriching experiences for the children. By enriching experiences I mean experiences which would facilitate the children's ability to cope with and adapt to the rapidly changing world around them. Initially my own personality played a major role in deciding upon the activities. I wanted to provide the children with experiences that they would not frequently have in public school. I finally narrowed the areas of concentration to drama, art, creative writing, discussions, social studies and mathematics.

My initial expectation upon entering the classroom was that the children would have had very little previous experiences in the inquiry approach. Using this approach on the first day, I met with different reactions from the children: Silence, confusion, but most frequently, extreme enthusiasm and involvement. It appeared as though many of them had been storing impressions and observations for months in order to discuss the question, "What is authority?" Not only did they discuss the question but they raised new questions in the process of discussion.

Another part of my preparations included meeting with teachers and parents. I met with the teachers to attain a comfortable rapport with them, to inform them of the approach I would take, and to discuss some of the activities I would use in the classroom.

I also participated with Mr. Robert Pringle and Dr. Dennis Warner in a meeting with parents and teachers where we presented an explanation of the origin of the program, the funding procedures, and information on the academically talented child. This meeting was followed three weeks later by a workshop for parents and teachers conducted by Mr. Pringle, Dr. Warner, Dr. Arlin Peterson and myself. A portion of the workshop was devoted to showing a video tape of the children in the classroom and soliciting reactions, comments and questions by the parents and teachers on the program to date.

One of the few requirements of the program was writing weekly lesson plans patterned after Frank E. Williams' model. This was to be done mainly for the benefit of the teachers who had students participating in the special class.

I would like to briefly sketch some of the activities which appeared to be most successful. Success was determined by the children's comments about the activities and by my own observations of their involvement and enthusiasm:

(1) Inquiry Island was an activity where the children landed on a small island which they had to civilize. Initially the experience was similar to that of the Swiss Family Robinson. The second stage involved the children moving to three different areas of the island; the desert, the plains, and the mountains. The children answered ten questions about their area of the island. These included:

"What are your natural resources?"

"Where are your major cities?"

"Which country do you have the best relations with? Why?"

The third stage of the activity involved trading among the areas. This inevitably led to discussions on war and peace.

I believe this activity was successful because the children had complete control over direction and outcome. It required that they use their imaginations and also make many group decisions.

(2) Another activity which the children really enjoyed was a project in photography and film making. This activity was greeted with enthusiasm by all the children. They were very curious to learn about the cameras, light meter and tripod. This enthusiasm was maintained because they had complete control over what was filmed and how the camera would be used to film it.

(3) I believe the discussions were greatly responsible for breaking down inhibitions and encouraging inquiry and individual ideas. Some of the things we discussed included:

"What changes will happen in the future?"

"How do you feel about the education system?"

"What should be the priorities of our country?"

"What do you worry about?"

Children are sincerely concerned about their social, familial and educational situations as well as important social, political and economic issues of the nation. Children must be given more of an opportunity to discuss and act on those issues which really concern them.

I have made continual observations of the children's progress as well as the success of activities. It is a very difficult task to evaluate the progress of children. It can only be evaluated by myself in a subjective manner. Because it would become too involved to attempt to evaluate each child in this paper, I will attempt to make relevant comments about some of the most frequently observed behavior changes.

One of the changes in behavior I was able to observe initially was a reduction in anxiety and fear when the children were told that there would be no grades or tests. I consider this a positive change.

Another important change occurred in the first few sessions when the children began to relate to me as a friend and a member of the group rather than a traditional authority figure. I believe this change happened as a result of several discussions in the first weeks where I

displayed an interest in and listened to some of the things they were most concerned about.

A change which was most noticeable near the end of the semester was a more immediate willingness to express themselves in a sensitive way both verbally and non-verbally with few if any inhibitions. This is only possible if children possess a high regard for both themselves and others. I believe the change was a result of classroom atmosphere, dramatics and discussion.

After several experiences in the classroom the children also asked more questions and displayed more curiosity about their environment.

One of my responsibilities in evaluating this program is to discuss its limitations as I see them and to make suggestions for improving the present structure. Following are the limitations and some suggestions:

One day a week attendance is not compatible with individual projects or activities which require considerable time. For example, it would be difficult with the present structure to carry on an in-depth study of ecology or a detailed culture study.

One day a week does not provide enough time to eliminate inhibitions and fears in some children. Unfortunately most of these children (10) dropped out of the program.

It would be extremely beneficial to have an assistant who could offer ideas and seek out resources to supplement the ideas and findings of the special classroom teacher.

One centrally located classroom would be convenient for purchasing more equipment and supplies, caring for animals and plants, and helping

the instructor in maintaining a sense of order in his or her teaching.

I could expound at great length, at this point, my own philosophy of education. I hope what has come before will already have given the reader an idea about my philosophy and attitude toward education and the role of the teacher.